



December 9, 2015

MPS Board of Directors  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
5225 W. Vliet Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear MPS Board of Directors:

I am very concerned and have questions about this unilateral move to halt all student travel around the world.

All without any public input or broader discussion.

Let me start by saying: I politically and morally believe that showing weakness and fear is exactly what global and American bred terrorists thrive on. MPS has just given them what they now will broadcast on the Internet, especially if other major city school districts follow suit.

What are the public safety criteria MPS uses to determine or regulate student activities when there is public location based violence or crime? Where are the planned locations for student travel that are deemed unsafe? I'm guessing there are no trips abroad scheduled in Syria or nearby.

Did MPS ban travel to NYC or major American cities after September 11? Has MPS ever banned student activities in Milwaukee neighborhoods plagued by gun violence and other illegal street activity?

Frankly, there's likely a stronger statistical chance that someone under age 18 gets shot or killed on certain blocks of an American city than random travel to an allied, normally safe and now well-guarded country in Europe or similar location.

A major part of the public education experience is developing strong, actively engaged, and well educated citizens in a free, democratic society. What better way to perform that task than to prepare our youth for the inevitable component of a global, mobile society in the 21st century, than to encourage international relationships and experiences?

**In my view, parents play the central role in a young person's education. Teachers and staff are critical leaders. The larger public including policy makers also have an important job. And of course ultimately it's students themselves who drive their own success or failure.**

Were any other stakeholders including those just mentioned ever consulted on this decision?

I'm not asking for any formal action or reversal of this policy necessarily as that is not my day job. But given that the vast majority of MPS funding comes from the State of Wisconsin, and as a longtime Milwaukee legislator and MPS graduate, I feel the need to ask for better and more detailed explanations for this decision. I'm sure it interrupts and disappoints a number of students and families and has broader implications for the overall policy of our nation's security and how we function as citizens and free people.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Josh Zepnick", with a stylized, flowing script.

Josh Zepnick  
State Representative  
9<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Wisconsin State Assembly